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FOR INFORMATION

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ON ITS WINTER ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION HELD AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS ON 24 AND 25 MARCH 1992

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

1. The Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) held its 1992 winter organizational session at United Nations Headquarters on 24 and 25 March. Officers of the Executive Board for the period 1 August 1991 to 31 July 1992 are as follows:

Chairman: H.E. Miss Mira Seth (India)

First Vice-Chairman: H.E. Mr. Bent Haakonsen (Denmark)

Second Vice-Chairman: Dr. Vaclav Vacek (Czechoslovakia)

Third Vice-Chairman: Miss Maymouna Diop (Senegal)

Fourth Vice-Chairman: H.E. Dr. Roberto Mayorga-Cortes (Nicaragua)

Chairman, Programme Committee: Mr. Frederick Ward (Canada)

Vice-Chairman, Programme Committee: Miss Chipo Zindoga (Zimbabwe)

Chairman, Committee on Administration and Finance: Mrs. Judith Springer (Barbados)

Vice-Chairman, Committee on Administration and Finance: Mr. Hiroharu Koike (Japan)

2. The Executive Board adopted the agenda of the 1992 winter organizational session, as amended, which, along with the list of documents for the session, is contained in document E/ICEF/1992/L.3. The Executive Board held four plenary meetings on 24 and 25 March 1992.

II. PLENARY MEETINGS

A. Introduction by the Chairman

3. The Chairman opened the organizational session by welcoming four new members of the Bureau of the Executive Board: H.E. Mr. Bent Haakonsen (Denmark), First Vice-Chairman; Miss Maymouna Diop (Senegal), Third Vice-Chairman; H.E. Mr. Roberto Mayorga-Cortes (Nicaragua), Fourth Vice-Chairman; and Mr. Hiroharu Koike (Japan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Finance. She reminded the Board that, according to decision 1990/1, during the organizational session the Board was to decide on the draft agenda and organization of work and to examine the status of documentation for the regular session. (The Chairman's opening remarks are contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.10.)

4. The Chairman reported that she had led the UNICEF delegation to the special session of the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee

on Health Policy (JCHP) in Geneva on 30 and 31 January, which, inter alia, had discussed the issues of the control of cholera and vaccine supply. She drew the attention of the Board to the rising prices of vaccines, noting that the problem had become a serious one because the cost of vaccines would rise from $46.8 million to $89 million in 1992, although part of the increase would be due to increased demand. The Bureau had discussed the issue and had requested the secretariat to prepare a paper on the subject for discussion by the Board at its regular session.

5. The Chairman's discussion paper and recommendation on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5) set out the views expressed by delegations on questions where some divergence of opinion could be expected, such as the rotation of the chairmanship, parallel meetings of the Board's two Committees and the extension of the length of the regular session. The Chairman also drew the Board's attention to a proposal submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for an alternative timetable for the regular session (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9).

6. After reviewing the rest of the agenda for the organizational session, the Chairman, on behalf of the Bureau, asked the Board to agree to a request made by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Committee on UNICEF to make a short statement on UNICEF/NGO collaborative activities regarding the education of the girl child.

B. Overview of key developments by the Executive Director

7. The Executive Director presented an overview of key developments relevant to UNICEF in the period between October 1991 and March 1992. The regular work of UNICEF had moved forward in all areas. Globally, progress had been sustained, except in situations of conflict and emergency.

8. Highlights of the past year included the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by 114 countries since 1990. In addition, over 120 national programmes of action were at various stages of development as a result of the World Summit for Children: 28 countries had finalized and formally presented their programmes; 18 countries had produced draft versions; and 78 countries were at the preparatory stage. The goals for children and development in the 1990s outlined in the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children had been endorsed by many Governments, with 135 signatories to date. In addition, the goals for children had been endorsed at every major regional summit meeting.

9. In Western Europe and North America, a number of national programmes had been completed or were well under way, and several countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States had national programmes of action. Sub-Saharan Africa posed the greatest challenge. Most were heavily burdened with debt and faced a continuing battle with problems such as malnutrition, high infant and child mortality rates and emergencies, both natural and man-made. Those countries offered the most critical test to achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children.

10. At a United Nations ceremony in October, the Director-General of WHO and the Executive Director had participated in a ceremony to certify to the Secretary-General that the 1990 goal of global immunization coverage of 80 per cent of all children had been met.

11. In June, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had endorsed and urged Governments to complete their national programmes of action and called for a donors' meeting in the fall of 1992. UNICEF welcomed the conference and was working closely with OAU on the preparations for the gathering, which would provide an excellent opportunity to demonstrate political will to honour the commitments of the World Summit for Children. In addition, a number of international strategy/policy meetings had taken place, including a meeting in Montreal on the elimination of micronutrient deficiencies and the First International Consultation on Control of Acute Respiratory Infections (ARIs) in December. Recently, the agencies working as partners in the safe motherhood initiative had met at the World Bank on the issue of operationalization of initiatives to reduce maternal mortality.

12. The UNICEF/WHO JCHP had endorsed the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative, which emanated from Executive Board decision 1991/22 (E/ICEF/1991/15) and aimed at promoting a massive return to breast-feeding in developing and industrialized countries. The initiative was tested during 1991 in 12 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa, where free and low-cost distribution of infant formula had now ceased. On the issue of vaccine requirements and rising prices for vaccines, JCHP had stressed the need for additional funds for vaccines and the need to establish a strategy for long-term supply, ensuring quality, quantity, security and price. In that regard, the Executive Director noted that vaccine requirements would be much greater in 1992 and that UNICEF might have to explore the possibility of multiyear contracts with vaccine suppliers.

13. The medium-term plan foresaw a significant increase in programme resources devoted to education. UNICEF had augmented its staff in that sector, and collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and others had been strengthened.

14. In Copenhagen, the past year had seen a ceremony marking the inauguration of the expanded office facilities provided by Denmark and a further move towards the development of coordinated United Nations procurement. The sharp increase in the use of the warehouse facilities reflected the unprecedented intensity of emergency activities during the year. Some 50 countries were provided with emergency assistance. Especially noteworthy was UNICEF participation in the joint appeal for the Horn of Africa. Particularly difficult was the organization's assistance to Somalia, where UNICEF was still active despite the tragic killing of one staff member. The Executive Director also noted that UNICEF welcomed the former Secretary-General's decision to designate the United Nations Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance in Somalia. And, as 1992 progressed, the drought in southern Africa would require a major response.

15. The situation in the Commonwealth of Independent States posed a challenge, as the recent assessment missions confirmed. The Working Group on Medicine established at the 23 January 1992 Coordinating Conference on Assistance to the Newly Independent States organized by the Government of the United States of America would meet again in the spring, and the UNICEF/WHO assessments would feed into that meeting in an important way. Substantive issues in those and other areas would be addressed at the regular session.

16. With regard to income, the Executive Director noted that total UNICEF income in 1991 had been $807 million, $51 million less than forecast in the medium-term plan and $14 million less than the income registered in 1990. The gap between projected and actual income was due almost entirely to foreign exchange rate fluctuations. If the United States dollar had remained steady, UNICEF income would actually have exceeded projections by several million dollars. None the less, the organization's liquidity was greater than in 1990.

C. Major issues before the 1992 regular session

17. The Board had before it document EB/1992/006, "Issues for the 1992 Executive Board session", which summarized the range of programme and operational issues to be discussed by the Board. The paper was introduced and commented on by the three Deputy Executive Directors.

1. Programme issues

18. The Deputy Executive Director (Programmes) briefly summarized some of the main programme issues to be discussed by the Executive Board. The first issue on the proposed agenda was the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1995 (E/ICEF/1992/3), which set out programme policies and shows their links to national programmes of action. In addition to the goals for the 1990s, important areas included human development priorities within the aid budgets of donor countries, cooperation in the least developed countries and the broader framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the role of UNICEF. Africa would continue to receive priority support, while the issues of Central and Eastern Europe (see document E/ICEF/1992/14) and the Commonwealth of Independent States would also be considered by the Board (see the information note by the Executive Director on UNICEF involvement in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Commonwealth of Independent States (E/ICEF/1991/CRP.3 and Add.1).

19. Other issues of importance in UNICEF programmes included the role and status of women and a series of health strategies ranging from the control of ARI to the Children's Vaccine Initiative and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) would be discussed in a separate paper being presented to the Board (E/ICEF/1992/L.13), as would the UNICEF response to emergencies within the framework of the United Nations system (E/ICEF/1992/11).

20. The Director of the Office of Planning and Coordination informed the Board about Summit follow-up activities and the preparation of national programmes of action by Governments. The largest number of programmes was in Latin America and the Caribbean, but there was also progress in Asia and the Middle East and North Africa. In Africa, virtually all countries had reported that they were preparing programmes. Some 30 countries reported no preparations, but many were the newly independent nations of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

21. Regarding Summit follow-up, one delegation asked if the secretariat foresaw discussion by the Board on national programmes of action that would lead to a Board decision. The Deputy Executive Director said that the secretariat would welcome guidance from the Board.

22. Concerning Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, one delegation wanted the report being prepared for the regular Board session to give due consideration to actions already taken by the Governments and to external assistance. The report should also provide a comparative analysis of UNICEF assistance to the area.

23. Another delegation said that her Government welcomed UNICEF assistance for children and women in the region and that it was important to use specific-purpose contributions for such assistance. That delegation noted that UNICEF assistance to its country had been reduced by $1 million in the last year.

24. One delegation from the region remarked that the countries in transition lacked medical equipment and food for children, and that the Government had submitted to UNICEF clear proof of the needs of children and women, which it was hoped would be helpful in preparing the documentation on the issue for the regular session. The reports of the UNICEF/WHO collaborative missions should be the basis for assistance to the region by the international community, the United Nations and UNICEF. Such assistance would not be for the long term, however, as the members of the Commonwealth aimed eventually to become donor countries.

25. The reports of the collaborative missions gave an objective picture of the situation of children and women in its country, noted another delegation. At its regular session, the Executive Board should have a full discussion of the issue that would serve as a basis for specific decisions.

26. The secretariat was requested to prepare as informative a report as possible for the regular session that would show the situation in individual countries and detail priorities and the necessary level of UNICEF involvement, within its mandate. The Executive Board must ensure that UNICEF was active where and at the levels needed. The view was also expressed that the report should be a comparative, action-oriented study, focusing on the comparative advantage of UNICEF in Central and Eastern Europe.

27. The Deputy Executive Director replied that the paper would report in full on cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe in 1991. Several delegations requested that the issue of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States be discussed as a separate agenda item rather than as part of a more general discussion of interregional and other programmes, and the secretariat agreed to revise the provisional agenda accordingly.

28. In response to a query from one delegtion, the secretariat informed the Board that the report being prepared on the UNICEF strategy for Africa (E/ICEF/1992/L.4) would discuss the OAU donors' conference and that UNICEF had been invited to help to prepare some of the papers to be presented at the conference. The secretariat would report verbally to the regular session on more recent developments.

2. External relations

29. The Deputy Executive Director (External Relations) presented a report on external relations and how they were integrated into the medium-term plan. The country programme recommendations being submitted to the Executive Board demonstrated that new country programmes were already incorporating the goals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Efforts to promote the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative had triggered commitments from manufacturers of infant formula throughout the developing world not to take action that would interfere with the programme. A test programme had begun in 12 countries and would be launched in 42 others.

3. Operational issues

30. The Deputy Executive Director (Operations) said that, although 1992 would be a non-budget year for the Executive Board, a number of important issues would be discussed by the Committee on Administration and Finance. As part of the medium-term plan, a report would be given on the financial plan that would provide a framework for the 1993 Board session. The report would also provide a framework for the preparation of administrative and programme support budget for the period 1994-1995 to be presented to the Executive Board in 1993.

31. A number of reports would be presented to the Executive Board in 1992 that resulted from specific requests made at the 1991 regular Board session. They include a series of reports on the structure and format of budget documents that were reviewed throughout the year at a number of meetings of the Budget Format Reference Group comprised of nine Board delegates and two coordinators from the UNICEF secretariat (documents E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.1, E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.8 and E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.12 to E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.17), and one on headquarters office accommodation (E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.9). The reports would be forwarded to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), whose comments would also be available at the regular session of the Board in June.

32. The Deputy Executive Director requested Board guidance regarding the preparation of a comprehensive review of existing project posts and the criteria for establishing such posts. Because the report on the criteria would be presented to the Board in June, she asked if the Board could wait until it had been discussed before the review was prepared. It was agreed that the review should be postponed until the 1993 regular Executive Board session. (See chap. IV, decision 1992/4.)

D. Preparations for the 1992 regular session

1. Status of documentation

33. The Secretary of the Executive Board briefed the Board on the status of documentation, as detailed in document E/ICEF/1992/INF/2.

2. Chairman's working paper on Board procedures/provisional annotated agenda and organization of work

34. The Secretary of the Board briefed members on the contents of the Chairman's discussion paper and recommendation on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5). A result of extensive work, the document reviewed the system by which the Chairman was elected and examined alternative procedures such as (a) rotation of the chairmanship among regional groups, which would bring UNICEF practice in line with that which generally prevailed within the United Nations system; and (b) replacement of the present rotation system of one-to-one between developing and industrialized countries by a system of two-to-one between developing and industrialized countries, whereby the chairmanship of the Board would be held by developing countries for two terms, followed by an industrialized country for one term.

35. The paper also examined measures to rationalize the work of the Board, including parallel Committee meetings, extension of the Board session by three to five days, biennialization of the general debate in non-budget years, biennialization of agenda items and reduction of the overall number and volume of annual documentation.

36. With regard to the recommendation itself, the Secretary of the Board reported that it included subjects on which the Bureau informal group believed consensus could be reached. The general debate would be shortened so that it would conclude at the end of the second day, with the Executive Director's response on the fourth day. The Programme Committee would begin its deliberations on the morning of the third day. Delegations would be urged to adhere to the time limits of 10 minutes during the general debate and 7 minutes for interventions in the Committees. The possibility of introducing a signalling system would also be investigated.

37. With regard to items 2 (a) and (b) of the recommendation, under "Rationalization of subjects to be considered at the regular Board session", the Secretary pointed to an error in the reference to the "March" organizational session, which should read "winter" instead of "March" organizational session.

38. The Secretary also drew the Board's attention to the proposal submitted by the United Kingdom for an alternative timetable for the regular session (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9). The Secretary stated that the provisional agenda for the regular session presented in document E/ICEF/1992/1 followed the past practice of sequential meetings, but that under the terms of the proposal by the United Kingdom, there would be five meetings of the Board and the two Committees would run in parallel from Friday of the first week of the regular session until Tuesday of the second week.

39. The sponsoring delegation stated that, although it was not a budget year, the Board agenda was overloaded, and night sessions with fatigued delegations were not conducive to obtaining the best results from the regular session. The alternative timetable his delegation had proposed would eliminate the need for four of the currently scheduled nine evening sessions and would facilitate the work of drafting sessions.

40. The majority of delegations addressing the issue concurred that the rationalization of the work of the Board was very important. Moreover, it was felt that the positive efforts being made in that direction were just the beginning and that there was still room for further progress.

41. An observer delegation expressed concern that some recommendations in the Chairman's paper appeared to discriminate between Board members and observers, in particular, the proposal that observer delegations be slotted to speak towards the end of the debate and into the night of the second day. The delegation felt that ministers and high-level functonaries from observer delegations should also be allowed to speak in early slots.

42. With regard to the issue of parallel meetings, many delegations, all from the industrialized countries, welcomed the proposal from the United Kingdom as a valuable step forward in the effort to rationalize the work of the Board. Some delegations felt that the proposal did not go far enough and that further clustering of issues for discussion was necessary, although another delegation felt that major themes and policy issues should be discussed under separate agenda items. One delegation stressed that the Board should focus on policy issues in its deliberations.

43. Many delegations pointed out that parallel meetings had been held in the past on an ad hoc basis. While no delegation found parallel meetings desirable in and of themselves, many expressed the view that to schedule parallel meetings would offer delegations the opportunity to plan their time more effectively and prepare themselves better. Parallel meetings would also reduce the need for evening and night meetings when delegations were fatigued and unable to give of their best.

44. Many other delegations, all from developing countries, did not support the scheduling of parallel meetings, since that alternative did not take into consideration the concerns of smaller delegations. Some delegations expressed concern that smaller delegations would not be able to participate fully in the session if the agenda was organized to allow for parallel meetings. That group of delegations supported instead the extension of the regular session by three to five days.

45. One delegation noted that delegations were neither small or large and that every delegation experienced difficulties at times meeting work obligations. With regard to extending the regular session, it was pointed out that there were meetings scheduled after the Executive Board, such as the Economic and Social Council, which would limit consideration of an extension.

46. While acknowledging the constraints of smaller delegations, some delegations supported the scheduling of parallel meetings since it was felt that they would take place whether or not they were scheduled. Regarding the point that some parallel meetings already took place on an ad hoc basis, one delegation stressed that they were not of the two Committees, but rather drafting sessions and related meetings. Therefore, the proposal to extend the session was a better alternative.

47. As a small delegation from an industrialized country, one Board member country that did not support the extension of the regular session, nevertheless supported the scheduling of a very limited number of parallel meetings as the lesser evil. Extending the session, it was felt, would contribute to the lengthening of statements, and thus increase costs all around - money and time that would be better spent on fulfilling key functions - and that that would be contrary to the broader United Nations principle of streamlining.

48. Of the delegations addressing the issue of rotation of the chairmanship, most supported the two-to-one rotation between developing and industrialized countries. Some delegations supported a regional approach, indicating the need to align with the practice of geographical rotation throughout other United Nations bodies. Although the latter alternative was preferred, one delegation would support the proposal for the two-to-one rotation system if the Board decided against the regional approach.

49. Several delegations noted that the issue of rotation of the chairmanship had been discussed many times in the past and that it was now time to take a decision. Those delegations noted that they would like to have the issue of rotation of the chairmanship taken up early on the agenda of the regular session in June.

50. The Chairman noted that there was no consensus on the issue of rotation of the chairmanship nor on the issue of the scheduling of parallel sessions or extension of the regular session.

51. The United Kingdom delegation proposed a drafting session to revise the agenda, to be headed by a Board member. The representative of Canada agreed to chair the drafting session.

52. After informal consultations and a drafting session, the Chairman of the drafting session informed the Board of the following conclusions:

(a) On the issue of rotation of the chairmanship, the following draft decision was proposed:

> "The Executive Board decides that the chairmanship of the Board will be held by developing countries for two terms followed by an industrialized country for one term, beginning in the Board year starting in August 1993".

The draft decision would be presented as part of a conference room paper based on that proposal and on information contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5, recommending that a decision on the question be taken by the Executive Board early in its regular session in June 1992;

(b) Based on discussions of documents E/ICEF/1992/1 and E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9 in drafting sessions, a revised provisional timetable for the 1992 regular session was prepared. Document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.12 proposes a schedule in which meetings of the two committees would run concurrently only once, on the morning of the sixth day, and drafting sessions and meetings of the Programme Committee would run concurrently on the afternoons of the fifth and sixth days and the morning of the seventh day.

53. The organizational session of the Executive Board adopted the provisional timetable and annotated agenda set out in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.12, as amended, for its Executive Board and Committee sessions, from 15 to 26 June 1992. Specific amendments included: inclusion of the question of rotation of the chairmanship early in the agenda; adjusting the order of programme reviews to provide a reasonable distribution over time of regional presentations between day and evening sessions; establishing a separate agenda slot for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; and adjustments to the timetables of the Committees to provide the most effective order of agenda items and the most efficient use of time.

54. The recommendation on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.13), was adopted as amended to replace references to the "March" organizational session with "winter" organizational session and to replace references to speaking times of member and observer delegations with a recommendation that the order of speakers in the general debate be organized to give precedence to ministers and high-level functionaries, followed by Board members and observer delegations (see sect. III, decision 1992/5).

3. Themes of informal meetings

55. The Executive Board had before it a provisional list of themes for informal meetings (E/ICEF/1992/L.3), to be held daily from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., from the second day of the Board session. The list included the following items: (a) Central and Eastern Europe (and the Commonwealth of Independent States): recent developments with respect to children; (b) nutrition goals, action and the World Nutrition Conference; (c) AIDS; (d) inter-agency cooperation and United Nations reform; (e) Education for all by the year 2000: developments since Jomtien; (f) evaluation - lessons learned and future plans; (g) sustainability and cost-effectiveness of UNICEF programmes; and (h) the UNICEF approach of country programming: integration of target achievement and process support.

56. Several delegations expressed preferences for various suggestions, and it was decided that the secretariat would take their comments under advisement in making the final selection.

E. UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

57. The Executive Board had before it a recommendation by the Executive Director regarding the UNICEF Maurice Pate Award for 1992 (E/ICEF/1992/P/L.1).

58. The Board decided to present the award to the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee for its outstanding contribution in providing exemplary service to the poor and most vulnerable populations, children and women and its innovative ideas in providing basic education, especially to girls, and health care (see sect. III, decision 1992/1).

59. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee had been founded in 1972 after the devastating upheavals of the liberation war. It was probably the largest indigenous NGO in the developing world, with over 4,700 full-time workers (plus over 6,000 part-time primary school teachers). It had developed its strategies and methodologies mostly through "learning by doing", although in a systematic fashion. Ideas and modules were first tested in a district, and if they proved to be successful, they were later expanded to scale.

F. Recommendations of the Joint Committee on Education

60. The Executive Board had before it a draft recommendation submitted by the Chairman on the recommendations of the second meeting of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.6). The report of the meeting had been presented to the Programme Committee during the 1991 regular session of the Board (E/ICEF/1991/L.15). The Committee had reviewed and discussed the contents of the report, but owing to a technical oversight, no formal action had been taken on the recommendations included therein.

61. The Executive Board endorsed a series of priority areas of cooperation between UNESCO and UNICEF and requested that the secretariats of the two organizations propose ways of strengthening their cooperation at the field level to achieve the goals set by the World Conference on Education for All and by the World Summit for Children (see sect. III, decision 1992/2).

G. Timing of winter organizational session

62. Before the Executive Board was a draft recommendation submitted by the Chairman concerning an amendment to Executive Board decision 1990/1 (E/ICEF/1990/13) on the timing of the pre-Board organizational session (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.7). In section 4 of that decision, the Board had decided that it would meet every January for an organizational session of up to two days that would replace the informal pre-Board meeting. Although it had become evident that, while the winter organizational session must be held in the first trimester of a given year, a certain flexibility was none the less required to accommodate the exigencies of a given Board-related calendar. The Board decided to amend section 4 (a) of decision 1990/1 to allow for the organizational session to be held at an appropriate time within the first three months of each year, but no later than 60 days preceding the regular session (see sect. III, decision 1992/3).

H. Standard Basic Cooperation Agreement

63. The Executive Board had before it a recommendation for a standard Basic Cooperation Agreement between UNICEF and Governments (E/ICEF/1992/L.2 and Corr.2) and a report on the standard Basic Cooperation Agreement (E/ICEF/1992/L.1 and Corr.1 and Add.1-Add.3).

64. The Deputy Executive Director (Operations) introduced the reports, noting that there was an urgent need for a new agreement because UNICEF could not renegotiate old or existing agreements until the Executive Board had taken note of the new one.

65. In the debate that followed, one delegation introduced changes to the proposed agreement concerning intellectual property used in cooperative programmes and exemptions from fees and restrictions on materials imported or exported by UNICEF. A number of delegations suggested that, because the proposed changes had been made at such a late date, the decision on the agreement should be deferred until the regular Board session in June. Other delegations remarked that, because the proposed text was only a basis for negotiations between UNICEF and Governments, the specific concerns of individual Governments could be addressed during such negotiations. Thus, the Board could take note of the text as it stood, allowing the issues of national applicability to continue to be discussed bilaterally with those Governments using the standard text as a basis for negotiations.

66. A representative of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat addressed the meeting and informed Board members that, once the Board had taken note of the text as proposed by the secretariat, both the Office of Legal Affairs and the UNICEF secretariat were prepared to indicate that they would see no difficulties if individual Governments preferred to use the language proposed in paragraph 25 of document E/ICEF/1992/L.1/Corr.1.

67. He said that, for almost 40 years, UNICEF had derived revenue from the sale of greeting cards. Whenever Member States had attempted to tax the sale of UNICEF greeting cards, the Office of Legal Affairs had intervened on the basis of the Convention on Immunities and Privileges. The sale of greeting cards was vital to UNICEF. The revenue was put directly into programmes and their sale was not considered a commercial activity. The Office of Legal Affairs had been successful in each case where it had intervened. To dilute that position by using discretionary terminology would undermine its achievements with other countries.

68. The Executive Director reminded Board members of the "extraordinary actions" by Governments that were prepared to give a unique status to UNICEF products in order to benefit children. He urged the Board to let the proposed text stand, because it was necessary to use its language as a basis for negotiation and to indicate to Governments what the expectations of UNICEF were.

69. A number of delegations expressed the need for further consultations and instructions from their capitals. They recommended postponing any decision until the regular session in June.

70. Another delegation felt that, since agreement on the issue seemed close, the Board should proceed to a decision. The proposed text was simply a framework from which countries could negotiate. Delegations did not have to indicate whether or not they liked the text.

71. Another delegation remarked that some consensus had been reached in informal consultations. The resulting text would enable the secretariat to continue discussions with Governments interested in signing new agreements. It was proposed to amend the text of the second paragraph of the summary in document E/ICEF/1992/L.2/Corr.2 (see sect. III, decision 1992/6).

72. It was thought that that text would enable the secretariat to continue discussions with Governments interested in signing new agreements and with countries with which UNICEF was currently negotiating an agreement. The conference room paper, which should deal with the issues of global applicability raised during the session, could note that the secretariat and the concerned countries had discussed the subject and reached an agreement.

73. Thus, the Executive Board took note of the standard Basic Cooperation Agreement.

74. Several delegations noted that they did not regard the Basic Cooperation Agreement as a binding text, and that they would like that fact to be reflected in the report of the session. One delegation said that flexibility had been necessary to reach agreement and, while his delegation took note of the fact that the stated agreement was an international basis for specific agreements, specific reservations could be taken into account, if the need arose to renegotiate the agreement.

75. An observer delegation noted that the Spanish version should match the English version.

76. One delegation expressed the wish to see the Basic Cooperation Agreement amended and functional in the near future. Reservations about the negotiability of the agreement between Governments and UNICEF should be of universal applicability, otherwise they might be a source of confusion in the future since only certain names would be mentioned.

77. Another delegation said that his delegation's understanding was that the agreement was a framework. While his delegation welcomed comments from observers, he wondered whether their delegations had the same rights as Board members and what their role was in the decision-making process. The Secretary of of the Executive Board explained that UNICEF had a long tradition of reaching agreement by consensus, thus achieving solidarity without vote-taking. Non-Board members participated fully in the work of the Board, and that unique feature had always worked well for the organization.

I. Other business

78. The Board heard a statement by a representative of the NGO Committee on UNICEF Working Group on the Education of Girls. She asked that, in addition to the statement made by the Chairman of the NGO Committee, a second representative be allowed to address the Board's regular session with regard to a Conference on Education for All Girls, to be held in New York on 21 and 22 April. The Conference would be making a number of recommendations, and the NGO Committee would like to relay them to the Executive Board in order to ensure that girls' education was high on the political agenda of all member States.

III. DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AT ITS 1992 ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

1992/1. UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

On the recommendation of the Executive Director,

The Executive Board

1. Decides to present the UNICEF Maurice Pate Award, established at its 1966 session to honour significant contributions by an institution in a developing country in advancing the well-being of children, and extended in 1988 also to include individuals, to the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee;

2. Approves an allocation of $25,000 from general resources for that purpose.

1992/2. Recommendations of the second meeting of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education

On the recommendation of the Chairman,

The Executive Board,

Having examined document E/ICEF/1991/L.13 containing the recommendations of the second meeting of the Joint Committee on Education,

1. Endorses the following priority areas for cooperation between UNESCO and UNICEF:

(a) Building a monitoring system linked to education-for-all goals, paying attention to new resources, accessibility, quality and learning achievement, and focusing especially on building up national capacities in this field;

(b) Ensuring girls' and women's education, including the development and use of the "third channel" as appropriate;

(c) Training and staff development in basic education, making maximum use of national capacity;

(d) Strengthening the planning capacities, as well as the cooperation between various ministries, particularly in least developed countries, which are responsible for formulating child-oriented policies and programmes, and advocating appropriate action to meet basic learning needs;

(e) Promoting innovative experiences in basic education, including their analysis and dissemination, making full use of (and, where necessary, establishing) regional networking;

(f) Supporting selected research on innovative child-care activities at the community level, primary education and literacy through national universities and other centres at the national and regional levels;

(g) Undertaking a feasibility study of the mass provision of strategic inputs, e.g., educational materials and equipment, frequently lacking for effective and relevant basic education practice;

(h) Working jointly on the ethos and content of basic education, combining basic skills with cultural aspects for human development;

2. Requests both secretariats to propose ways and means of strengthening their cooperation at the field level to achieve the goals set by the World Conference on Education for All and by the World Summit for Children;

3. Decides to review, in due course, the programme of cooperation as undertaken by the UNESCO and UNICEF secretariats.

1992/3. Amendment to decision 1990/1 on the timing of the pre-Board organizational session

On the recommendation of the Chairman,

The Executive Board

Decides to amend section 4 (a) of decision 1990/1 to read as follows:

"The Executive Board will meet at an appropriate time within the first three months of the year, but no later than sixty days preceding the regular session, for an organizational session of up to two days that will replace the informal pre-Board meeting".

1992/4. Amendment to decision 1991/29

The Executive Board

Recommends that the Executive Director defer implementation of paragraphs 1 (a) and 1 (b) 1/ of Executive Board decision 1991/29 until its 1993 session, pending the outcome of the Executive Board's review, at its regular session in 1992, of the criteria for core and project posts, as requested in decision 1991/30, paragraph 2 (d) 2/.

1992/5. Future work and procedures of the Executive Board

On the recommendation of the Chairman,

The Executive Board,

Recalling its decisions 1987/1, 1987/2, 1989/1, 1989/3 and 1990/1 regarding rationalizing and streamlining the work of the Executive Board,

Taking into account that the General Assembly, in paragraph 20 of its resolution 46/190 of 20 December 1991, invited the Executive Board to review its meeting and documentation requirements in the light of their significant financial implications and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session (1992), through the Committee on Conferences,

Having examined the major issues identified in the Chairman's discussion paper on this subject as contained in document E/ICEF/1991/CRP.6,

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1/ "Requests the Executive Director to provide the Executive Board, at its next regular session, with a comprehensive review of existing project posts and the criteria for:

"(a) The establishment of project posts at headquarters, in relation to core posts and to their respective functions, bearing in mind the principle that core functions should be financed from the administrative and programme support budget and from the 6 per cent surcharge from supplementary funding;

"(b) The conversion of posts from project to core and vice versa;".

2/ "Recommends ...

"(d) A study and report on the criteria used to decide, in particular at headquarters, which posts should be financed from core or other funds;".

Decides to improve further its procedures and to rationalize the utilization of time of the regular Board sessions as follows:

1. Rationalization of time

(a) Meetings should be convened on schedule and the documentation for each session should be made available to delegations in all languages at least six weeks in advance;

(b) The time allocated to the general debate should be shortened by concluding it on the evening of the second day of the Board session;

(c) During the general debate, the order of speakers will be organized to give precedence to ministers and high-level functionaries, followed by Board members and observer delegations;

(d) The response of the Executive Director should be delivered on the morning of the fourth day of the session, as is the case in other forums, to give the secretariat adequate time to prepare it;

(e) The 10-minute time-limit for interventions in the general debate should be scrupulously observed. Permanent missions are requested to stress this to their delegations in advance of the Board session. Delegations that so desire could circulate longer versions of their statements;

(f) The 7-minute time-limit for interventions by delegations in committees and 15 minutes for presentations by the secretariat should be scrupulously observed;

(g) The secretariat is requested to investigate with the United Nations the possibility of installing an appropriate signalling system in the conference room to indicate and monitor the time-limit to speakers, the Chairman and participants alike.

2. Rationalization of subjects to be considered at the regular Board session

(a) The secretariat is requested to provide, at both the winter organizational and regular sessions of the Board, a table indicating the subjects included in the agenda for the previous, the present and the two subsequent years;

(b) The Board should devote special attention at its winter organizational session to additional possibilities for the rationalization of the work of the Board, including a review of meeting and documentation requirements;

(c) The Board should review, at each regular session, the subjects planned for inclusion in the agenda of the following session, with a view to

eliminating those items that are no longer relevant or that bear less frequent reporting and to further streamlining the agenda of the Board;

(d) The Board should examine, before the end of each regular session, a comprehensive list of the reports being requested in draft Board decisions, with a view to reducing the overall number and volume of separate reports.

3. Documentation

Taking into consideration that page limits have already been established, of 6 pages for regional progress reports, 12 to 14 pages for smaller country programme recommendations and 16 to 18 pages for medium-sized and larger ones, and recognizing that the Executive Director's report, the budget document and the medium-term plan are, by their nature, exempt from a standard page limitation:

(a) A maximum length of 15 pages, as opposed to the current limit of 24 pages, is set for policy papers and other similar documents;*

(b) The following schedule of documents for future Board sessions identifies some documents that should be considered annually by the Board and others biennially, or as otherwise mandated. In turn, this list could determine the frequency of listing the relevant issues on the agenda of the Executive Board, leading, at the same time, to lightening the agenda of the Board and facilitating more in-depth discussions of fewer major agenda items.

4. Periodicity of reporting

Based upon current expectations and foreseeable needs, the secretariat is requested to observe the following reporting cycle:

Document	Frequency
Progress report on Summit follow-up	Annual
UNICEF strategy for Africa	Annual
Report on Children's Vaccine Initiative	Annual, in the Executive Director's report
Strategy for prevention of human immune deficiency virus (HIV)/ acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)	Annual, in the Executive Director's report

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* If this proposal is accepted by the Board, an exemption must be made for those documents that are already at an advanced stage of preparation for the 1992 regular session.

Document	Frequency
Progress report on UNICEF policy on women in development, including the situation of the girl child	Biennial, in non-budget years (in interim years, to be included in the Executive Director's report)
Acute respiratory infections	Annual, in the Executive Director's report
Report on overall progress and results achieved in evaluation	Periodicity subject to discussions at the 1992 Board session
Documents pertaining to the work of the Executive Board Reference Group on the format of the budget	Any follow-up will be dependent on discussions at the 1992 Board session

1992/6. Standard Basic Cooperation Agreement between UNICEF and Governments

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the standard Basic Cooperation Agreement, as well as taking note of concerns expressed by some delegations, to enable the secretariat to use it in negotiations with Governments with which UNICEF cooperates in programmes, with due respect for national legislation, as and when this is mutually agreed by the concerned Government and UNICEF;

2. Requests the secretariat to continue discussions with concerned Governments and report back on this in a conference room paper to the June 1992 session.